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Daughters of the American
Revolution

5th Continental
Congress, 1896



REPORT OF MRS. DEB. RANDOLPH KEIM
MEMBER OF THE
Committee on "Continental Hall,"
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,
SUBMITTED TO THE
Fifth Continental Congress
OF THE
National Society, D. A. R., on February 21, 1896.

To the President General, Officers, and Delegates of the Fifth Continental Congress, D. A. R.:

I have been requested by the chairman of the Continental Hall Committee, of which I am a member, and also by the President General to prepare for the information of the Continental Congress, Daughters of the American Revolution, now in session, a report showing what has been done by that committee during the past year.

I regret to say that owing to circumstances beyond the control of the chairman of the committee, no meeting was called. Therefore, so far as the work of the committee is concerned, the perfection of preliminary arrangements and the recommendation of a line of progressive action remain where they stood at the time of the meeting of the Fourth Continental Congress.

The first formal meeting of this important committee was held upon the call of the chairman in New York City on June 18, 1894. There were present at that meeting six out of the ten members which then constituted the committee.

At the request of the members of that committee I took pleasure in preparing a "Retrospect" covering eighteen octavo pages printed, giving "an official review of the proceedings of

the Continental Congresses, the National Board of Management, and the previous committee Daughters of the American Revolution," respecting the building of a "Continental Hall" at Washington, District of Columbia. This paper, dated October 9, 1894, was addressed to the chairman of the committee. A small edition printed for the use of the Chapters under the different State Regencies was also delivered to the chairman at Chicago.

The object of this "Retrospect" was to give such information as might be necessary to enable the Chapters throughout the country to move in intelligent coöperation with our own efforts as members of the National Society.

It is my opinion that this "Retrospect" should be distributed, if it has not already been so applied, to the different Chapters, or that a new edition (revised and brought down to date with other applicable information leading to more active work) should be printed. At least ten to fifty copies of this document should be mailed to each State and Chapter Regent, so that the entire membership of the Society shall know what has been done.

I am informed upon inquiry from official sources that there is now in hand a building fund of nearly \$7,000, which has accumulated through careful management of the Society's revenues. The credit to this fund of surplus of revenue over expenditures I have no doubt could be largely increased if the national management had before it some practicable and accepted project leading up to the consummation of our hopes of having in the near future a Memorial or Continental Hall owned, equipped, and managed exclusively by the national organization known as the Daughters of the American Revolution—the great patriotic organization of women which we represent in this Continental Congress here assembled.

I do not advocate impatient or undue haste, but still something should be done to keep the movement awake and active. We will be beset by every sort of annoyance, particularly by superserviceable persons with plans innumerable and choice lots without end, all of course to be offered in a deep spirit of

patriotism over the past and sacrifice in the interest of the Society in the future. We shall want a committee which will not be carried away by plausible men or women, but which will weigh everything and act deliberately and together.

The scheme proposed is a vast undertaking and should be so considered by every member of the Society. It is not sentimental nor eutopian in its scope in the hands of a small, carefully selected committee adapted to the work. A large committee for purposes of active work is always cumbersome and invariably impedes by a diversity of counsel or often conflict of interests general or personal. It is also impracticable to get together a large committee, the members of which may be scattered from Maine to Texas and Washington to Florida. This in itself might prostrate the work of those in position to carry the movement on to a prospective consummation and another year will have passed away with no better prospects of a Continental Hall than are presented to-day.

It seems to be agreed on all sides that such an institution would be a great benefit to the Society. The membership of nearly 13,000 to-day may be 20,000 in another year. A Memorial Hall such as is proposed would be a bond of cohesion, union, and strength.

The first committee on this subject of "A Home" was proposed on October 24, 1891, approaching five years ago, by Mrs. Ellen Hardin Walworth, of New York. At the meeting of the National Board, December 14, 1891, these resolutions were unanimously adopted.

At the same time the suggestion of Mrs. Marshall McDonald was adopted, which proposed as a supplementary resolve that "the Treasurer General open an account by which all life membership fees in the National Society and payment for Chapter charters or certificates should be appropriated to creating a Permanent Fund for the erection of a fire-proof building for the preservation of the records of the Society."

This was the official beginning of the movement and the inauguration of the Building Fund.

As I have mentioned, the fund has been growing, but the building is not yet in sight, even on paper.

In order to propose something tangible I reproduce one of the original resolutions, unanimously adopted December 14, 1891, and several additional ones which I propose in order to prepare the way for some action being taken by this Congress, trusting that another year will produce some evident results.

1. *Resolved*, That the establishment of this National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution on a permanent basis would be advanced or secured by the founding of a "home" for the Society which shall also answer the purposes of a Memorial Hall. [Res., October 21; December 14, 1891.]

2. *Resolved*, In furtherance of the above resolution, that a committee of seven, comprised as follows: One chairman, a member of the Society, to be appointed at large; one member to represent the Chapters of this Society in the New England States; one member to represent the Chapters in the Middle States; one member to represent the Chapters in the Southern States; one member to represent the Chapters in the States east of the Mississippi River; one member to represent the Chapters in the States west of the Mississippi River; one member to represent the Chapters in the States of the Pacific Coast; be appointed by the President General in consultation with the Chairman of the said Committee on Continental Hall.

3. *Resolved*, That the chairman of the said Committee on Continental Hall shall be named as soon as practicable after the adjournment of this Congress by the President General and confirmed by the National Board of Management, Daughters of the American Revolution.

4. *Resolved*, That any number of members of said Committee on Continental Hall present at any meeting regularly and publicly called, each member having been notified of the date in writing at least ten days in advance of such meeting, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business.

5. *Resolved*, That the place of regular meeting of said committee, upon call of the chairman as above provided, shall be at the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia; provided, however, that for the facilitation of special business connected with the work of the committee, the Chairman may appoint such convenient locality in the same manner as for regular meetings.

6. *Resolved*, That the chairman of said committee be instructed to report in writing to the National Board of Management, Daughters of the American Revolution, from time to time showing the progress of the work.

7. *Resolved*, That the written approval, properly certified by the State Regent and Chapter officers of three-fourths of the States and Territories of the United States, to the Chairman of said Committee on Continental Hall, and by her submitted to the National Board of Management, to be ratified by them, of three-fourths of the officially recorded Chapters in each of the States and Territories of the United States of America, of any plan or project in the line of these resolutions, submitted to them for action, shall be regarded as expressive of the will of this Society.

8. *Resolved*, That the name of the committee herein provided shall be "The Committee on Continental Hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution."

9. *Resolved*, That only Chapters officially recorded and acknowledged by the National Board of Management of the Daughters of the American Revolution shall have recognition under the provisions of the seventh resolution herewith.

10. *Resolved*, That the chairman of the said committee be hereby empowered, subject to the regulations governing the National Board of Management, Daughters of the American Revolution, in such cases, to have done such printing as may be necessary in furthering the objects of the committee, and also shall have furnished such stationary and postage as may be necessary in the prosecution of the work in view, the same to be reported to the National Board of Management for their approval, and no bills for printing, stationary, or postage for the use of the said committee shall be approved by the National Board unless they have the written approval of the chairman of the said committee.

It will be observed by this outline in the form of resolutions that the project is taken up from its inception. Each section of the country is represented on the committee, which is proposed for business only. As a preliminary move, the chairman of the committee will be untampered by details which come later in the movement; the usual and fatal embarrassments of non-attendance in committee work is avoided by fixing the quorum. I would have it so that whatever number be present after public and written individual notification that shall be sufficient for the transaction of business, as all acts ultimately pass under the eye of the National Board of Management before effective. The meeting in Washington, the headquarters of the National Society, will keep the committee and the National Board in touch with each other, and the chairman,

who should be considered ex-officio a member of the National Board, would have an opportunity to confer at the regular meetings of the Board.

The official sanction of three-fourths of the State Regents and Chapters in each State and Territory and of three-fourths of the States and Territories on the rolls of the Society would make a very comprehensive concensus of opinion and authority of the Society on such a momentous and responsible undertaking.

I submit, in a separate paper but as part of this report, as a means of bringing before you a realization of what we contemplate, a sketch plan of a Memorial Continental Hall or Temple of Patriotism which conforms in its general features to the views expressed to me by our late President General, Mrs. Harrison.

I shall not incorporate here an explanation of the plan, but shall undertake to do so verbally.

Respectfully and cordially submitted to the Fifth Continental Congress Daughters of the American Revolution.

MRS. DEB. RANDOLPH KEIM,
First Vice President General, D. A. R.,
Member Committee on Continental Hall.

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